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VIRGINIA IN 1682.

(Abstracts from Sainsbhry Papers, and Copies from McDonald and De Jarnette Papers, Virginia State Library. From the Originals in the British Public Record Office.)

(Continued)

SIR HENRY CHLCHLEY TO THE KING.

May it please Your Exc^t Ma'ty

About a week agoe there happened a strange Insurrection (1) in the heart of this Your Ma^{ties} Country of which I beseech Your Ma'ty to permit me as in duty bound to give this short account That the people of Gloucester have cut up their own and others growing Tobacco near two hundred Plantations as I am credibly informed to the great prejudice of many Loyal Inhabitants and noe small detriment to Your Ma^{ties} Interest, there being a great river and about fifty miles of ground between them and mee they committed their outrages three days before y^e least intimation of their proceedings at James Citty where I then was with Your Ma^{ties} Council at a General Court, and about four days before, had prorogued an Assembly which was called and ready to sit before the arrival of Your Ma^{ties} Commands to the contrary. I presedly dispatcht Coll. Kemp(2) with orders to raise Foot and Horse forthwith to suppress them by force of Arms which hee effectually executed (with what haste he could) upon the first party hee met is still id quest of the rest, hobe success and humbly beg Your Ma^{ties} good opinion that my best endeavours shall not be wanting, suppose the Burgesses big with the thoughts of a Cessation and being unexpectedly yet necessarily prorogued by Your Ma^{ties} Command have blown this coal which hath inflamed the people,

(1) This was the "Plant Cutting" when many Colonists, in desperation at the low price of tobacco, attempted to increase the value by destroying a large part of the growing crop. Much has been published in former numbers of this Magazine in regard to this matter. Sir Henry Chichely was then Lieutenant and Acting Governor.

(2) Col. Matthew Kemp, of Gloucester County.

have wrot at large to Mr. Sec'ty Jenkins. Shall not trouble Your Ma^{ties} farther at present but to beg your pardon and your gracious acceptadce of my prayer, That it would please God to protect and bless Your Ma'ty forever Your Ma^{ties} most obedient subject and servant Hen. Chichley.

From Middle Plantation May y^e 8th 1682

[Endorsed] Rec'd 14th June 1682

SIR HENRY CHICHELEY TO SECRETARY JENKINS

Right Hon'ble

I am heartily sorry I have occasion to give you so speedy an account of this Country's estate, the people of our County of Gloucester having last week in a tumultuous manner cut of half the Tobacco plants among them some whereof voluntarily destroyed their own and then joined forces and in several parties to the number of twenty or more maugre opposition by the Planters that owned them cut of all plants wherever they came. They had begun three or four days before I had notice of it, being then at a General Court at James Citty, immediately I issued out my Proclamation to that County and soon after to all others to stop their proceedings seconded with a Commission to Coll. Kemp, one of the Council here, to suppress them by force, which with all possible haste hee effectually put in execution taking two and twenty of them in the fact, all w^{ch} except two more violent and incorrigible than the rest immediately submitted, begged pardon and promised amendment and were dismissed home The two before mentioned were remitted to mee and the Council at James Citty and are now in safe custody I hope my endeavours which shall not be wanting may quench this growing flame. Of the further progress and total quelling of it I shall give Your Honor speedy notice by a ship that I expect will sail ten days hence. The probable occasion as farr as I can yet see of this commotion is briefly thus The Lord Culpeper adjourning the Assembly after w^{ch} was prorogued till Jan. the last, And the next month Mr. Nat. Bacon(3) by letter to me reciting part of his Lo'ps letter the purport whereof was that an

(3) Nathaniel Bacon, Sr.

Assembly should be called some time last month, by which time it was hoped his Lo^p would arrive here and myselfe having not received a sillible to that time from any Publick Minister nor indeed till neer the middle of April about which time Capt. Jeffries arrived with pay for the Soldiers: The beginning of March I issued out Writs for the convening the Assembly I fear unhappily because when I received His Ma^{ties} Commande not to call them to sit some of them were then on their way to James Citty and by consequences too late to prorogue them untill met and they big with expectation to enact a Cessation, by the most but not the wisest thought the only expedient to advance the price of Tobacco and being advised by the Council to propose to the House of Burgesses whether they would continue His Ma^{ties} Soldiers on the Country's pay before their prorogation according to the tenor of His Ma^{ties} letter by strange pretence they delayed for fower days their answer as will appear by their Journal and ours to bee remitted you by the Secretary here to whom I further referr you at present. They were prorogued with unanimous advice of the Council till the 10th of November next in obedience to His Majesties Command. But before their prorogation, as I since understand, they voted their Journal should be publickly read by their Burgesses when thhe got home to their respective Counties upon the perusal of which it will be easy for Your Honor to observe how the people came inflamed and the Soldiers by abridgement of their pay and some delay occasioned by my necessary presence at the General Court being apter to mutiny than to serve His Ma^{tie} here, must of necessity in this juncture of time bee with all expeditione disbanded cannot as yet see the bottom nor discover who are chiefly concerned in this tumult nor indeed what will be the issue

It hath an ill face in many respects I can only say for myself your Honor may bee assured I shall manifest my allegiance upon all occasions, submit the whole matter to your prudent consideration and depend upon your generosity for all the just favor can bee shown to Right Hon^{ble} Your Honor most fatihful & obedient servant Hen. Chickley

Middle Plantation [Endorsed] Rec'd 15 June 1682

May 8th 1682—

NICHOLAS SPENCER(4) TO SECRETARY JENKINS

James Citty May 8th 1682

Right Hon'ble

I have not of late presumed to trouble your Honor with my letters and doe most heartily wish had other matter to signify to Your Honor than the substance of this letter for know the contents will bee as unwelcome to Your Honor as they are grievous to mee to write being now to tell Your Honor the quiet and peace of this His Ma'tye Colonie is not only hazarded by unruly and tumultuous persons but is at present under such sufferings, by a combination of many inhabitants in Gloucester County entering into a resolution to force a Law by their wills that noe Tobacco should be this year planted, the which readily to effect on the first of this month began their evil undertakings First with cutting up their own plants and soe proceeded from plantation to plantation using a forcible way of persuasion by telling the Masters of Plantations where they came if not willing to have their plants cut up they would create a willingness in them by force, and in an hours time destroy as many plants as would well have employed twenty men a summer's tendance to have perfected. These outrages were in progress over three days before the Lieut Governor had any intimation thereof himselfe and the Council being then at James Citty holding the General Court as soon as received advice thereof issued forth-Proclamations whereby to restrain such Riots, tumult, outrages and violences the which to make effectual dispatched Coll. Kemp a worthy gentleman of the Council and Commander of Gloucester Militia with orders to raise such members of the militia Horse and Foot as might be effectual to suppress and reduce the Mutineers whom with his Horse hee surrounded and took every man of them in the very act of destroying of Plants. Two of the principal and incorrigible rogues are committed, the rest submitting and giving assurances of their quiet and peaceable demeanour and behaviour were remitted, hope by this time other parties of the Mutineers may be reduced tho its to be feared the contagion will spread. This day have re-

(4) Nicholas Spencer, Secretary of State.

ceived intelligence that the next adjacent county being New Kent was lately tooke forth committing the like spoyle on plants as in Gloucester County the which to suppress is the like care taken by way of the Militia Horse and Foot or soe many them as may, in this juncture, be admitted to arms. And least the infection should grow, general orders are gone forth to the Commanders of the Militia of each County to provide a party of Horse to be in continual motion, by which vigilancy are in some hopes the growth of these Insurrections and Outrages may be prevented and in it should not write doubtfully did I not know the necessities of the Inhabitants to bee such by their own Commodity Tobacco, soe now sunk to nothing that their low estate makes them desperate and resolve a Law of Cessation of their own making if goe forward the only destroying Tobacco Plants will not satiate their fits to be feared rebellious appetites which if increase and find the strength of their own Arms will not bound themselves.

To add to this unexpected evil His Ma^{ties} Soldiers being two companies and just upon the point of disbanding and sensible His Ma^{ties} hath been pleased to Command their disbanding on the first of April and noe pay appointed after that day, are so far from being serviceable in this ruly time of assistance from them since their arrival, that their mutinous temper double our apprehensions of evil events. Had not the Ship on which was loaded the Soldiers money been long wind bound and on her passage beyond usual time His Ma^{ties} Soldiers had been paid off before these present commotions hapined, the Soldiers' quarters are now accounting for and the Soldiers and Landlords will day after day bee paid off and the Soldiers disbanded and the Country freed of the mischiefs which may be from their mutinous demeanors.

His Ma^{ty} was pleased to command the disbanding of the two companies if the country would not continue them on the public charge. The Assembly met in five days after the arrival of those His Ma^{ties} commande being by writ from the Lieut. Governor Sir Henry Chichley soe appointed near forty days before the arrival of the Ship Concord; by which ship His Ma^{ty} was likewise pleased to signify His Royal will and Pleasure that

noe Assembly should be held or permitted to sit until the 10th of November next, by which time His Exc^{ie} the Lord Culpeper would be remanded to this his Government by whom His Ma'ty would be pleased to signify his Royal Will and Pleasure to the last addresses of the General Assembly, and that his Lo^{ds} arrival will be in time for an Assembly the said 10th of November. The Assembly convened by the Lieut Governor being met hee communicated to the Council His Ma^{ties} commands both as to the disbanding the Soldiers unless continued at the Countrys charge and likewise His Ma^{ties} Commande that noe Assembly should sit until the tenth of November to both of which that the Council according to their duty might pay and yield all due obedience were of the opinion the Assembly being met tho convened without the advice or consent of any one member of the Council yet should be permitted to set only to advise whether to continue the guards at the Country's charge or not in which proposition the House of Burgesses seemed to spend some days without any other answer then desiring from day to day time to resolve being a point in which to gain time to carry on other imaginations, the principal part of which was a cessation, for which as the assembly was called peculiarly by the unfortunate motions of the over-active clerk of the House of Burgesses Major Robert Beverley soe his influence was noe less in the House when convened. The continuance of the Assembly not being agreeable to His Ma^{ties} Commande they were prorogued on the twenty seaventh of April to the 10th of November by which prorogation the selfish purposes of some persons were frustrated, most particularly the Clerk of the House of Burgesses who to accomplish his designes of noe Tobacco this year to be planted to advance those great quantities of Tobacco now on his hands has instilled into the multitude as it is vehemently suspected, to justify the right of making a cessation by cutting up of plants; soe that the ground and rise of our present troubles and disorders is from the ill-timed Assembly.

Sir: About ten days hence will sail other ships by them shall be able to speak more positively to our Commotions than at present therefore will now beg leave to close with subscribing

R^t Hon'ble Your Honor's most faithful and obedient Servant

Nicho: Spencer

[Endorsed] Rec'd 14 June 1682

REPORT ABOUT COMMOTION IN VIRGINIA.

May it please Yo^r Ma^{ty}^{ie}

Wee have read three letters from Virginia dated the 8th of May last one being from Sir Henry Chicheley Lieut^t Govern or of that Colonie to Yo^r Ma^{ty}^{ie} another from him to the Right Hono^{ble} Mr. Secretary Jenkins, whereby wee are given to understand that Sir Henry Chicheley having called an Assembly before the receipt of Yo^r Ma^{ty}^{ies} letter forbidding him to call an Assembly or permit them to sitt without the consent of seaven of the Council, Hee had accordingly with the advice and consent of the said Council permitted them to sit several days pursuant to the directions he had received; during which time they had made divers motions, addresses and speeches tending to Sedition and raising disorders in the Government by a specious pretence of improving the Trade of Tobacco by procuring a cessation from planting and by fomenting other apprehensions which had formerly been a chief occasion of the late Rebellion. After which the Assembly having been prorogued in pursuance of Your Ma^{ty}s commands to the 10th of November next and their Journal having been published throughout the Colony by their order several tumultuous and disorderly people were met together in Gloucester County and had cut up and destroyed the growing Tobacco of neer two Hundred Plantations which riot had noe sooner been suppress by the Militia but another broke out in the next adjacent County of New Kent committing the same spoils on Plants as in Gloucester County. Whereupon the like orders had been given to the Militia or soe many of them as in this juncture might be admitted to take arms for the hindering the further growth and evil consequences of this Insurrection which is very much apprehended by reason of the present necessities and desperate condition of the Inhabitants And wee are further by those letters informed that Robert Beverley, Clerk of the Assembly had not only very much influenced the House of Burgesses in their seditious motions before they were prorogued but had afterwards alsoe, as it was vehemently suspected, instilled into the multitude the violent means of effecting their end of a cessation by cutting

up the growing Tobacco Upon consideration of all which particulars Wee are humbly of opinion that the Lord Culpeper Your Mat^{ies} Governor in Chief of Virginia may receive your directions to repair to his Government with all possible speed, in order to find out, by the strictest enquiry, the abettors and instruments of this commotion, and to put a stop to the further progress of it And that to this end the Frigate intended for Jamaica may bee immediately fitted out for the carrying him to Virginia his Lo^p having declared himself ready to goe thither in case of exigency within a weeks time after notice given him.

And since by the several relations wee have received this Insurrection appears to have been promoted and carried on to the great disturbance of the publick peace of the Colony. Wet cannot but offer our humble advice to Your Ma^{ty} that some person who shall be found most faulty may be forthwith punished, to the end the dignity of the Government may be preserved and all evil minded men deterred from the like attempt for the future. After which and not before the Government may be directed to consider of and propose with the advice of the Council or Assembly as he shall think fit some temperament in relation to planting of Tobacco and raising the price of that commodity And forasmuch as Robert Beverley Clerk of the Assembly is represented to have been a chief promoter of these disorders Wee humbly offer that the former Instructions given to the Lord Culpeper for the putting him out of all employment and places of trust may be renewed and forthwith put in execution. Lastly wee take leave humbly to move Your Ma^{ty} that as there are divers quantities of Your Ma^{tys} Stores remaining in Virginia which had been sent thither during the late Rebellion Your Ma^{ty} would be pleased to direct the Lord Culpeper to sell upon his arrival, all such Stores as the Country will buy and to secure the rest for your Ma^{ties} service.

All w^{ch} Etc

Whitehall

14 June 1682

ORDERS ABOUT THE CONDITIONS AT VIRGINIA.

At the Court at White Hall the 17th of June 1682

Present

The King's most Excellent Ma^{tie} in Council

Whereas the Right Hon'ble the Lords of the Committee for Trade and Plantations did by their Report this day read at the Board humbly represent That by three letters from Virginia dated the 8th of May last one being from Sir Henry Chicheley Lieut^t Governor of that Colony to his Ma'ty, another from him to Mr. Sec'ty Jenkins and one from Mr. Nicholas Spencer of Virginia ro Mr. Sec'ry Jenkins they are given to understand That Sir Henry Chicheley having called an Assembly before the receipt of His Mat'ys letter forbidding him to call an Assembly or permit them to sit without the consent of seaven of the council hee had accordingly with the advice and consent of the said council permitted them to sit several days pursuant to the directions he had received during which time they had made divers motions , addresses and speeches tending to Sedition and raising disorders in the Government by a specious pretence of improving the Loade of Tobacco by procuring a cessation from planting and by fomenting the apprehensions which had formerly been a Chief occasion of the late Rebellion. After which the Assembly having been prorogued in pursuance of His Ma'tys commands to the tenth of November next and their Journal having been published throughout the Colony by their order, seferal tumultuous and disorderly people were met together in Gloucester County and had cut up and destroyed the growing Tobacco of near 200 plantations which riot had no sooner been suppress by the Militia but another tooke out in the next adjacent county of New Kent committing the same spoils on Plants as in Gloucester County whereupon the like orders had been given to the Militia or soe many of them as at this Juncture might bee admitted to take Arms for the hindring the further growth and evil consequedces of this Insurrection which is very much apprehended by reason of the present necessities and desperate condition of the Inhabitants.

And that their Lo'ps were further informed by those letters that Robert Beverley, Clerk of the Assembly had not only very much influenced the House of Burgesses in their Seditious motions before they were prorogued but had also, as it was vehemently suspected, instilled into the multitude the violent means of effecting their end of a cessation by cutting up the growing Tobacco. And their Lo'hs having humbly offered it as their opinion that the Lord Culpeper His Ma^{ty} Governor of Virginia may receive directions to repair to his Government with all possible speed in order to find out by the strictest inquiry the abettors and Instruments of this Commotion and to put a stop to the further progress of it—His Ma^{ty} upon consideration thereof was this day pleased to order and command that the Lord Culpeper doe imbarque himself on such of His Ma^{ty} Frigates as shall be provided for his Transportation to Virginia by the first of August next—And in the meantime that his Lo'p doe prepare himselfe as to be in readiness to goe on board within a week stime after notice in case of any sudden emergency. And their Lo'ps further representing that by the Several relations they had received, this Insurrection appears to have been promoted and carried on to the great disturbance of the Publick Peace of the Colonie.

It was thereupon likewise ordered by His Mat'y in Council according to their Lo'ps advice in this particular That the said Governor doe cause some of the persons who shall bee found most faulty to bee forthwith proceeded against and punished to the end the Dignity of the Government may bee preserved and all evil-minded men bee deterred from y^e like attempts for the future. After which and not before the said Governor is hereby Ordered and directed to consider of and propose with the advice of the Council or Assembly as he shall think fit some temperament in relation to the planting of Tobacco and raising the price of that Commodity. And as to Robert Beverley, Clerk of the Assembly who is represented to have been the chief promotor of those disorders it was ordered by His Ma^{ty} in Council That the Lord Culpeper according to former instructions in that behalf, doe at his arrival cause the said

Beverley to be immediately put out of all employment and places of Trust within the said Colony.

And lastly it is ordered by His Ma^{tie} in Council upon th Report of the said Lords Committees That the said Lord Culpeper doe upon his arrival give directions for selling such quantities of His Ma^{ties} Stores that had been sent thither during the late Rebellion as the Country will buy and secure the remainder for His Ma^{ties} Service.

(To be Continued)